

Twisted and Textured

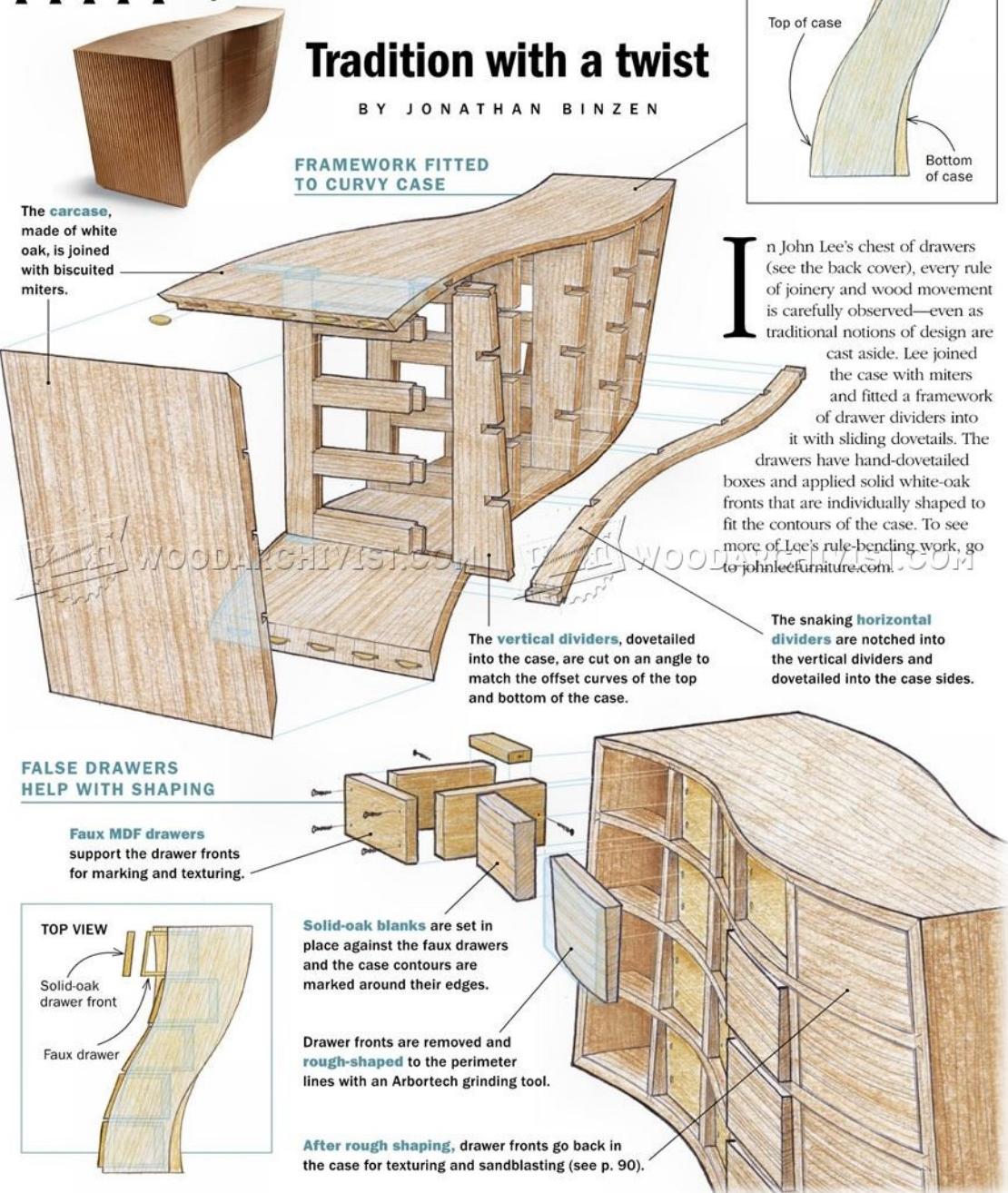


The main image shows a large, curved wooden cabinet made of solid European white oak. The cabinet features a textured surface with routed coves and striations that taper along the top edge. It has multiple drawers with unique, hand-dovetailed limewood drawer boxes. A small inset image in the bottom right corner provides a close-up view of the cabinet's construction, showing the dovetail joints and the curved profile of a drawer.

Even before he learned to walk, John Lee was a constant presence in his father's woodshop, where he would stand for hours in a playpen and watch his father work. By age 3 or 4, he had projects of his own under way. Four decades on, working full time in a shop he built behind his father's house in County Meath, Ireland, Lee uses traditional techniques to create extremely innovative furniture. His chest of drawers in solid European white oak not only curves but also twists and tapers, requiring that each of its 20 hand-dovetailed limewood drawer boxes be joined at a different angle and fitted with a uniquely shaped applied front. Inspired by driftwood and erosion, Lee textured the chest with routed coves that taper as they wind across the top, and with rough, routed striations on the face of the cabinet that are etched right across the dividers as well as the drawer fronts. To increase the appearance of natural weathering, he sandblasted the exterior of the piece. Still boyish in his enthusiasm for woodworking, Lee now walks his own path through the craft.

—Jonathan Binzen

how they did it



In John Lee's chest of drawers (see the back cover), every rule of joinery and wood movement is carefully observed—even as traditional notions of design are cast aside. Lee joined the case with miters and fitted a framework of drawer dividers into it with sliding dovetails. The drawers have hand-dovetailed boxes and applied solid white-oak fronts that are individually shaped to fit the contours of the case. To see more of Lee's rule-bending work, go to johnleefurniture.com.

The snaking **horizontal dividers** are notched into the vertical dividers and dovetailed into the case sides.

how they did it

continued

